

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. – 17. (cancelled)

18. (currently amended) A method for the preparation of three-dimensional molded parts having a leather-like surface wherein:

a porous surface of a vacuum tool is introduced into a pulp containing leather fibers, suspending agents, binders and optionally usual additives, the porous surface of the vacuum tool having the geometry of the three-dimensional molded part;

the pulp containing leather fibers in an amount of from 0.1 to 10% by weight and a majority of the fibers have a length of from 0.2 to 3 mm;

leather fibers and binder being deposited in a desired layer thickness on the surface by applying a vacuum in the vacuum tool; and

transferring the surface to a press tool and densifying the leather fiber layer.

19. (currently amended) The method according to claim 18, further characterized in that said molded parts ~~is~~ are profiled.

20. (currently amended) The method according to claim 18, further characterized in that said molded parts ~~is~~ are dried.

21. (currently amended) The Method according to claim 18, further characterized in that said molded parts ~~is~~ are provided with a surface finish.

22. (previously amended) The method according to claim 18, characterized in that the porous surface of said vacuum tool is formed from a material selected from the group consisting of a sintered powder metal, a ceramic, a metal foam, and a plastic foam or screen.

23. (cancelled)

24. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, characterized in that said pulp contains leather fibers in an amount of from 0.5 to 2% by weight.

25. (currently amended) The method according to claim 18, characterized in that the surface properties of the molded parts can be modified by embossing, grinding, plasma treatment, corona treatment, sand blasting or shot blasting.

26. (cancelled)

27. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, characterized in that a pulp is employed which contains leather fibers of a length of from 0.3 to 3 mm.

28. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18 characterized in that said binder is selected from the group consisting of natural rubber, polyurethane, polyacrylates, dispersions of acrylic esters, vinyl esters and isobutylene polymers and mixed polymers, or a vinyl acetate.

29. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, characterized in that said binder is present in an amount of from 10 to 50% by weight, based on the dry weight.

30. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, characterized in that said binder is present in an amount of from 15 to 30% by weight, based on the dry weight.

31. (currently amended) The method according to claim 18, characterized in that the molded parts ~~has~~ have an average dry layer thickness of from 0.1 to 6 mm.

32. (currently amended) The method according to claim 18, characterized in that the molded parts ~~has~~ have an average dry layer thickness of from 0.1 to 2 mm.

33. (previously presented) The method according to claim 20, characterized in that the drying step comprises the polymerization, polycondensation, cross-linking and/or film forming of the binder.

34. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, characterized in that a mold with mobile slides for forming undercuts is employed.

35. (currently amended) The method according to claim 18, characterized in that the molded parts ~~is~~ are released from the surface of the vacuum tool and provided with a foam backing or injection-molded backing.

36. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18 characterized in that a pulp is employed which further contains non-collagenous fibers.

37. (previously presented) The method according to claim 36 characterized in that said non-collagenous fibers are selected from the group consisting of cellulose, cotton and/or plastic fibers.

38. (previously presented) A three-dimensional molded part having a leather-like surface and obtainable by a method according to claim 18.

39. (previously presented) The molded part having a leather-like surface according to claim 38, comprising furniture, clothing, accessories, installation parts, veneers and trims.

40. (previously presented) The molded part according to claim 39, characterized in that said trim are selected from the group consisting of floor trims, pillar

trims, trunk trims, door trims, dashboard trims, switches, gearshift levers, seat cushions, seat rests, doorknobs and steering wheel covers.